

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

Minutes of the Meeting of the Senate Steering Committee held on 27 November 2006

Present: Vice-Chancellor (Chair)  
Professor S Bassnett  
Professor L Bridges  
Professor A Caesar  
Professor Y Carter  
Mr B Duggan  
Professor R Lindley  
Professor M Luntley  
Professor M Whitby

Apologies: Professor J Jones, Professor S B Palmer, Professor M Smith, Professor H Thomas.

In Attendance: Academic Registrar, Director of Communication, Director of Estates, Director of Finance, Deputy Registrar, Registrar, University Secretary, Ms N Snodgrass, for item 129/06-07 the Acting Director of HR, for item 130/06-07 the Head of Student Finance, for items 132/06-07 to 134/06-07 the Senior Assistant Registrar (Teaching Quality).

124/06-07 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2006 be approved.

125/06-07 Leverhulme Trust Awards 2007 (minute 107/06-07 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Social Studies)

That a draft institutional bid for submission in the 2007 Leverhulme Foundation Research Programme Award Scheme was being developed within the Faculty of Social Studies.

126/06-07 University Strategy (minute 108/06-07 refers)

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That members of the University had begun to submit suggestions in response to the recently-launched consultation on the development of a strategy for the University's future direction and advancement and that the proposed timetable for the consultation process would be circulated to the Steering Committee for its next meeting to be held on 4 December.

127/06-07 IT Update

CONSIDERED:

A report providing an update on developments relating to the recent power failure and consequent disruption to the GroupWise email system, including the proposed acceleration of the transfer of staff to Microsoft Exchange and the ongoing assessment of the impact of data loss (SC.93/06-07, tabled at the meeting) together with an oral report from the Registrar.

RESOLVED:

That the Steering Committee record its thanks to the Registrar for the significant progress made in rectifying and mitigating the issues arising from the GroupWise disruption, in particular with regard to the acceleration of the transfer of staff to Microsoft Exchange.

128/06-07

BBSRC Genes and Developmental Biology Committee

REPORTED: (by the Vice-Chancellor)

That Professor E Jones, Head of the Molecular Physiology Research Group in the Department of Biological Sciences, had been appointed as Chair of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council's (BBSRC) Genes and Developmental Biology Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Steering Committee record its congratulations to Professor Jones on her appointment.

129/06-07

HR Update

RECEIVED:

A report providing an update on current issues relating to HR, including the outcome of the new University pay and grading structure and the progress of appeals against the outcome of the job evaluation process; the progress of consultation and negotiations with Trades Unions on the harmonisation of terms of conditions of employment in Phase 2 of the Framework Agreement project; the progress of implementation within the University of the Fixed Term Workers Regulations (2002); and recent developments relating to pay level negotiations with the Trades Unions (SC.76/06-07).

130/06-07

Warwick Undergraduate Aid Programme (WUAP)

CONSIDERED:

A paper providing an update on WUAP expenditure to date against Access Agreement targets and outlining proposed changes to the University's Access Agreement for the academic year 2007/08 as permitted by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) (SC.80/06-07) together with an oral report from the Head of Student Finance.

REPORTED:

That the Registrar, the Director of Finance and the Head of Student Finance would be pursuing with OFFA the scope for making changes to the University's Access Agreement within the five-year period for which the Agreement had been approved.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the proposed changes to the University's Access Agreement for the academic year 2007/08 be approved as set out in paper SC.80/06-07 for submission to the Office for Fair Access by the deadline of 30 November 2006.
- (b) That the University's overall provision of financial support for all students be raised as an item for discussion at a future meeting of the Steering Committee.

131/06-07

Taught Postgraduate Courses: Decision-Making Times

CONSIDERED:

The proposal that the University adopt a target of providing a response to applications for taught postgraduate courses within four weeks of their receipt (SC.79/06-07).

RESOLVED:

That the proposed four-week target for making decisions on applications for taught postgraduate courses be endorsed as set out in paper SC.79/06-07 on the understanding that, while this target would be adopted as the norm, departments running programmes in high demand would be permitted to negotiate alternative targets where necessary and appropriate.

132/06-07 National Student Survey: Memorandum to Departments (minute 112/06-07 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The revised memorandum to Heads of academic departments encouraging adherence to good practice in assessment and feedback practices and personal tutoring (SC.90/06-07).

RESOLVED:

That the memorandum to Heads of academic departments be approved for circulation subject to minor amendments along the lines discussed at the meeting.

133/06-07 HEFCE Consultation on TQI and NSS Developments (minute 92/06-07 refers)

CONSIDERED:

The draft University response to HEFCE circular letter number 23/2006 setting out proposals in regard to the development of the National Student Survey (NSS) and the Teaching Quality Information (TQI) website (SC.85/06-07).

RESOLVED:

That the draft institutional response to HEFCE circular letter number 23/2006 be approved for submission to the HEFCE by the deadline of 6 December subject to amendments along the lines discussed at the meeting and that the response to the HEFCE incorporate the University's position on sharing external examiners' reports with student representatives.

134/06-07 QAA Audit of Overseas Provision: Hong Kong

CONSIDERED:

A copy of a letter from the QAA on its audit of overseas partnership arrangements in Hong Kong during the academic year 2006/07 requesting the submission of a commentary on the link between the University and Hong Kong Polytechnic University together with a copy of the draft commentary (SC.84/06-07)

RESOLVED:

That the draft commentary on the University's collaborative partnership with Hong Kong Polytechnic University be approved for submission to the QAA by the deadline of 30 November subject to amendments along the lines discussed at the meeting.

135/06-07 Review of the School of Engineering (minutes 30/06-07 and 50/06-07 refer)

CONSIDERED:

Revised proposals for the review of the current structure and management of the School of Engineering (SC.82/06-07).

RECOMMENDED: (to the Senate and the Council)

- (a) That the current arrangements for the structure and management of the School of Engineering be extended until such a time as a new Dean of the School takes up his or her post or until 31 July 2008.
- (b) That the new Dean of the School of Engineering, when appointed, be requested to consider the structure of and management arrangements in the School, in full consultation with the University, and to bring forward recommendations for consideration by the Senate and the Council in due course.

136/06-07 Board of Governors of Hereward College

REPORTED: (by the University Secretary)

That Ms C Zara's term of office as the University's representative on the Board of Governors of Hereward College would expire on 31 December 2006, that Hereward College had indicated its support for Ms Zara's re-appointment to the Board and that Ms Zara had confirmed her willingness to be re-nominated.

RESOLVED:

That Ms C Zara of the Centre for Lifelong Learning be nominated as the University's representative on the Board of Governors of Hereward College for the period 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2010.

137/06-07 Senate Business

RESOLVED:

That the comments and recommendations of the Steering Committee on the items of business for the meeting of the Senate to be held on 6 December 2006 be as set out in the papers circulated for the meeting of the Senate.

138/06-07 Dearing Review of Languages

CONSIDERED:

UUK Information Note I/06/128 on the Dearing Review of Languages and Lord Dearing's suggestion for intervention by HEIs, working in collaboration with FE colleges and specialist language colleges, to increase take-up of languages in secondary schools (SC.87/06-07)

RESOLVED:

That the Chair of the Board of the Faculty of Arts and the Chair of the University's Modern Languages Committee discuss the potential development of proposals for action in response to Lord Dearing's suggestion with a view to bringing forward any proposals in this regard for consideration by the Steering Committee in due course.

139/06-07 DfES Guidance on Extremism

RESOLVED:

That the guidance document recently published by the Minister for Higher Education on tackling violent extremism on University campuses be circulated for the information of members of the Steering Committee.

140/06-07 Shadow Minister for Higher Education

RESOLVED:

That the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) discuss with the Registrar and the Director of Communication the proposal that the Shadow Minister for Higher Education be invited to visit the University to discuss current issues of note within the higher education sector.

141/06-07 Queen's Speech 2006

RECEIVED:

UUK Information Note I/06/130 highlighting relevant elements of the legislative programme to be undertaken during the 2006-07 Parliamentary session as announced in the Queen's Speech on 15 November (SC.86/06-07).

142/06-07 Department of Health Consultation on Healthcare Professional Regulation: UUK Response

RECEIVED:

UUK Information Note I/06/125 on the UUK response to the recent Department of Health consultation on healthcare professional regulation (SC.89/06-07).

143/06-07 Delivery Partnership: Improving the Higher Education Applications Process

RECEIVED:

UUK Information Note I/06/126 providing a summary of the purpose, structures and outcome of the first Progress Report from the Delivery Partnership Steering Group (DPSG) together with a copy of the DPSG Progress Report (SC.88/06-07).

144/06-07 MRC Strategic Review of Virology

RECEIVED:

The University's submission to the strategic review of virology research recently undertaken by the Medical Research Council (SC.91/06-07).

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29/11/06